connections has been provided during the last six months under the said rule;

(c) whether Government provides telephone in Gujarat also under the said rule;

(d) if so, the number of people to whom telephone connection has been provided under the said rule; and

(e) if not, by when the said facility is likely to be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) In MTNL, Delhi the telephones are available on demand in most of the exchanges in Technically feasible localities.

(b) During last six months 30308 new telephone connections were provided within 7 days from the date of their registration.

(c) to (e) During last six months 26390 telephones have been provided within seven days from the date of registration in Gujarat. Department of Telecom Services proposes to provide telephone on demand in Gujarat by 31-3-2002. So far upto 31-3-2000 19.22 lakh telephone connections have been provided in Gujarat. During the current financial year, it is proposed to provide 3.3 lakh new telephone connections.

Setting UP OF VPT by Private Operators

4615. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private basic phone operators have reneged on conditions to set up village public telephone;

(b) how many such private basic telephone operators are in the country;

(c) how many village public telephone were to be set up by them;

(d) how many have actually been set up;

(e) whether there is a shortfall in the actual public phones installed and the agreed number; and

(f) the steps proposed to take action against such operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF

COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Basic Telephone Service Licensees have failed to set up VPTs as per targets committed by them in licence agreements.

(b) There are six private licensees in the country so far.

(c) and (d) Their commitments and achievements are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(e) Yes Sir.

(f) Government is taking appropriate action under the provisions contained in Licence Agreements. Letters have been issued to private licensees of telephone service for achieving the targets committed for first 3 years of licence by the date of completion of such 3 years period from the effective date of their licence agreement.

Statement

Status of Provision of VPT by Private Licensees

Licensee & licensed Circle	Effective date of licence		Committed targets* for VPTS in first three years (as per obligations under licence agreement)	No. 1 of VPTs actually provided till date
1	2	3	4	
		I Yr.	**II Yr. III Yr.**	
1. M/sTTL (AP)	30-9-1997	9635 (By 30-9-98)	(All villages were to be covered in first year *i.e.* by 30.9.1998)	Nil
2. M/s RTL (Gujarat)	30-9-1997	8635 (by 30-9-98)	All villages were to be covered in first year *i.e.* by 30-9-1998)	Nil
3. M/s Essar (Punjab)	30-9-1997	5442 (by 30-9-98)	(All villages were to be covered in first year *i.e* by 30-9-1998)	Nil
4. M/s HIL (MH)	30-9-1997	4000 (by 30-9-98)	21760 (by 30-9-99) No Village was to be left uncovered by 30-9-99)	Nil

1		2	3	4
5. M/s BTNL (MP)	30-9-1997	5500 (by 30-9-98)	55500 5500 (By 30-9-99) (By 30-9-2000)	12
6. M/s STL (Raj.)	4-3-1998	7439 (by 4-3-99)	10629 13766 (by 4-3-2000) (4-3-2000)	Nil

* Translated into absolute terms based on bid/tender documents keeping in view the committed target for DELs and the figure for number of uncovered villages indicated in the tender.

Improvement of Telecom Services

4616. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Department and its subsidiaries are unable to provide simple services like Directory Information, Billing schedules and fault repair services;

(b) whether no Telecom region has been able to overcome the said state of such service;

(c) if so, the reasons for failure to improve the basic services of telecom like Directory Information, Fault Repair and getting any response from operators of the telecom regions;

(d) whether any effort has been made to improve the training and orientation of personnel; and

(e) if so, the details of such steps taken to improve the performance of the telecom services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (e) Department of Telecom Service and its PSU *viz.* MTNL are operating, among others, services like Directory Information, Billing and Fault repair services. The services are generally working satisfactorily except during major breakdowns. To further improve their performance following steps are being progressively taken:

(i) Computerisation of Directory Information and Fault Repair Service.